

Emerging Markets Program Central Fund Proposal

Full title of proposal: Embassy Science Fellows Program (ESFP)

Date of proposal submission: August 27, 2008

Name of organization (s) submitting proposal:

Trade and Scientific Exchanges Division (Principal Coordinator)
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service
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Program Objective:

The U.S. Department of State Embassy Science Fellows Program (ESFP) offers U.S. Embassies an opportunity to host a working scientist for a one to three month stay. Begun in 2001 as a State Department - National Science Foundation (NSF) partnership, the Embassy Science Fellows Program places USG scientists at posts to provide expertise, advice and assistance with science and technology-related issues. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) are participating agencies. Implemented in 2007, OCBD/TSED agreed to collaborate with the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), to encourage involvement by faculty from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Specific assignments, to be approved by post's Chief of Mission, are developed in consultation with the parent agency, the Fellow, the post, and the State Department. USDA pays for the Fellow's non-lodging per diem and international travel costs, while posts must provide housing, office space, computer, email/internet access and local travel costs from their own resources. The Fellow's employing agency or institution has to pick up all salary costs for the duration of the Fellowship.

FAS Agricultural Affairs Officers in foreign countries that are considered as "emerging markets" frequently require information on agricultural biotechnology and/or sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulatory issues to address trade issues with host country governments and international groups. Although they have basic information at hand to address such issues, they often lack scientific or regulatory expertise on specific contentious topics (e.g., food safety, environmental risk assessment, identity preservation and seed certification, biosafety protocol). In such situations, often with relatively short notice, FAS Officers request assistance from FAS/Washington to provide experts for

technical support. For medium-term assistance, posts may request support under the Embassy Science Fellows Program, which places scientists at U.S. embassies overseas for periods of one to three months.

Description of Problem and Current Conditions in Targeted Markets for Products:

The Embassy Science Fellows Program enables posts to acquire high-level scientific advisory capacity to address important S&T issues involving foreign policy, national security, agriculture and agricultural trade, biotechnology, biofuels, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements, identification of new markets for our agricultural products etc. Simultaneously, the program also provides USDA staff, participating university faculty, and technical consultants with an opportunity for gaining valuable international experience, training and networking in emerging markets.

Target Markets: Range from some of our largest trading partners such as Mexico to rapidly developing economies in Asia-Pacific, as well as emerging markets in Africa, Dominican Republic –Central Agreement Free Trade Agreement countries, and South America. Because requests for specific assignments come from overseas posts, with project duration of one to three months, it is difficult to anticipate target markets or to predict lengths of specific assignments. Requests already received from FAS Officers overseas for 2008/2009 illustrate the type of activities anticipated.

U.S. Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Post is seeking two Embassy Science Fellows to assist in assessing and providing technical advice on agricultural regulations. The Embassy Science Fellow would work with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, and Fisheries (MAFF) to review, prioritize, and implement designing plant pest and disease control programs; building a sanitary and phytosanitary system to facilitate regional and global exports; providing guidance and comments in the drafting of regulations and sub-decrees; agribusiness small and medium enterprise market development; and agro-based industries and technology development. The Embassy Science Fellow would assist Cambodia in fulfilling its commitments under the U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement signed in 2006.

U.S. Embassy, Guangzhou, China. Post is seeking an Embassy Science Fellow to assist local government agencies involved in food safety, food producers, and universities to learn more about where deficiencies lie in China's food safety control systems. The Embassy Science Fellow would be invaluable in helping assess those systems and provide recommendations on how the U.S. government can assist China in strengthening overall food safety.

U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq Post is seeking an Embassy Science Fellow to provide technical assistance in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to review existing GIS capabilities, identify future needs, and recommend overall strategies for organizing GIS individual and collective capabilities within Iraq; environmental remediation advice and technical assistance; and training in biodiversity. The Embassy Science Fellow will provide an excellent mechanism for updating the scientific capacity of the country, increasing the scientific exchanges, assistance, and collaborations with U.S. scientists,

and addressing some of the most pressing knowledge gaps.

U.S. Embassy, Seoul, South Korea South Korea has begun to import food grains derived from biotechnology; however local non –governmental organizations and companies are opposed to selling these products. The Embassy Science Fellow would help educate consumers and hopefully change thinking on this debate; a change in consumer perception would have broad ramifications for the imports of U.S. grains and soybean product.

Rationale for the Proposal: USDA funds a number of programs in which foreign scientists receive training in the United States (Borlaug, Cochran, Faculty Exchange, etc.). The ESFP provides for established U.S. scientists to inform and educate larger numbers of foreign counterparts in their home settings.

The ESFP offers U.S. Embassies opportunities to host working scientists for one to three month stays at posts to provide expertise, advice and assistance on science and technology issues. Fellowships are allocated in accordance with FAS' Strategic Goals and Objectives, viz., Creating a Level Playing Field for Agricultural Trade; Expanding the Global Agricultural Trading System; and Reducing Technical Trade Barriers and Restrictive Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures.

Market Constraints to be addressed: Over the years, the FAS sponsored ESFP has provided in-country technical assistance on matters of agricultural science, capacity building, agricultural policy, market access, and other issues involving tariffs and trade. WTO accession and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have spurred the need for U.S. experts in trade related areas, food safety, food processing, inspection and certification, market analysis, tariffs, subsidies and trade barriers.

Why Federal Funding is requested: The ESFP is a cost sharing program in which the USDA pays the Fellow's non-lodging per diem and international travel costs, while posts must provide housing, office space, computer, email/internet access and local travel costs from their own resources. The Fellow's employing agency or institution has to pick up all salary costs for the duration of the Fellowship. TSED implements the ESFP with financial support from the EMP for costs associated with international travel, M&IE, medical insurance, and clearance related matters etc.

Target Economies: The target economies vary from large and important trading partners such as China, India, and Mexico to emerging markets in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Central and South America.

Program Approach and Description of Activities to be undertaken: Announcements for the ESFP are typically made in early spring by the U.S. Department of State with inputs and guidance from the various participating government agencies. Individual posts and missions are free to submit requests for Fellows at any time for their specific areas of interest. It is the responsibility of the ESF Program Coordinator to select a qualified Fellow for the assignment based on the technical requirements of the posts.

The Fellow's agency pays salary, non-lodging per diem and international travel costs, while posts must provide housing, office space, computer, email/internet access and local travel costs from their own resources. Salaries for Fellows from universities are borne by their institution, while salaries for consultants are treated as part of the consultancy costs.

Specific activities to be undertaken by the ESFP will depend upon the needs and recommendations of the posts or missions. However, TSED will provide overall guidance in the selection of Fellows. Fellowships are allocated in accordance with FAS' Strategic Goals and Objectives.

Anticipated Benefits from the Program: The ESFP provides expert counsel to our embassies on issues involving agricultural policy, market access, trade capacity building, economic development, plant and animal health, food safety, bioterrorism, etc. Stakeholders/beneficiaries include policy-makers, administrators, scientists, U.S. government agencies, universities, foreign government bodies, and international organizations and U.S. exporters. The ESFP has a very successful track record of providing scientific knowledge and technical capacity building in FAS' priority areas which include SPS related issues and biotechnology. Since 2002, USDA has sponsored a total of sixty fellows in the program.

Agricultural Trade & Production Data Supporting Proposal: The United States is now the world's largest agricultural exporter. The value of agricultural exports equals nearly 25 percent of farm cash receipts, about twice the level of the overall U.S. economy, and with one out of three acres planted for export. With rapid productivity growth coupled with a slow growth in domestic demand for food and fiber, U.S. agriculture must seek new markets abroad and expand existing ones. The most promising markets are typically located in rapidly growing developing countries.

Agricultural trade with developing countries will continue to grow rapidly as population, income levels, and the demand for processed foods grow at a faster pace than in developed countries. Consumers in rapidly developing countries are shifting towards more meat, dairy products, fruit, juices, and western-style processed foods as a result of more disposable incomes and changing life styles. Huge disparities in trade remain due to agricultural tariffs and other barriers to free trade. Embassy Science Fellows have played a vital role in capacity building of scientists and policy makers from many countries with issues involving WTO accession, inspection and certification procedures, SPS training, integrated pest management techniques, biotechnology, biofuels, futures markets etc.

Performance Measures for Program Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted using: a) program evaluation based on surveys completed by the Fellows immediately following the assignment; b) evaluation of Fellows by the sponsoring U.S. Embassy; and c) Evaluation of the Final Report submitted by the Fellow in terms of technical merit and relevance to agricultural trade.

Timeline for Implementation of Project, Including Start and End Dates:

Announcements for the ESFP are typically made in early spring by the U.S. Department of State with inputs and guidance from the various participating government agencies. We are seeking funding for the 12-month period October 1st, 2008 through September 30th, 2009. All monies will be allocated by the end of FY2009; however, it is anticipated that some of the activities may continue into early part of FY2010.

Have similar project activities been funded by USDA or others in the target economy?

Yes, OCBD/TSED has sponsored numerous Embassy Science Fellows that were supported by both the EMP and FAS appropriated funds. The ESFP is unique in that it provides opportunities for U.S. researchers, policy makers, and consultants to travel abroad to provide in-country technical assistance to posts, missions, and foreign governments. Scientific exchange programs such as the Cochran, Borlaug and Faculty Exchange Programs typically provide opportunities for young scientists from developing countries to visit the U.S.

Support for Program: The ESFP's cost sharing approach is particularly cost-effective in that FAS only pays for round-trip economy travel, mandatory training costs, and full M&IE for the first 30 days and half for all remaining days. Post provides housing, office space, computer access, and local transportation. The Fellow's agency or institution is responsible for his or her salary. Over the years, FAS (TSED and former RSED) has successfully solicited the participation of Fellows from several USDA Agencies, faculty from land grant universities, and consultants to assist our posts and overseas missions. TSED continues to receive numerous requests from posts, missions, and land grant universities to sponsor additional Fellows in cutting edge scientific training, trade capacity building and agricultural policy.

Detailed Line Item Budget for proposal: Funding of \$229,740 is being requested from the Emerging Markets Program Central Fund to cover the majority of direct expenses of this program in 2009.

Qualifications of proposal applicant: FAS/OCBD/TSED provides leadership in identifying, developing, and coordinating strategic international research/science-based exchange initiatives for the United States Department of Agriculture. TSED's mission is to: 1) develop and administer programs and activities involving trade, science and technology exchanges in agriculture in support of overall agency goals and objectives as well as foreign policy initiatives; 2) manage and operate the Cochran Fellowship, Borlaug Fellowship, Scientific Cooperative Exchange, Scientific Cooperation Research, Embassy Science Fellows Program, the Visiting Scientists Program, the Faculty Exchange Program, and Local Currency Programs; and 3) develop, coordinate, and implement technical short courses, training and mentoring programs in agriculture taught by universities, USDA agencies and others in the U.S. and abroad. TSED is the principal program sponsor.

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Budget Estimate by Activity						
Project	Embassy Science Fellows Program					
Country:	Global					
Activity:	Program Implementation					
LINE ITEM	# of Units	Price per Unit	# of Days	EMP FUNDS REQUESTED	OCBD OR THIRD PARTY PARTNERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS ESTIMATE	NOTES
Travel & Per Diem and related expenses						
				\$194,640		
Fellowship program						
International Travel	20	\$3,500		\$ 70,000		Coach class 20 Fellows
MI&E	20	\$62	61	\$75,640		
Lodging	20	\$150	61		\$ 183,000	US embassy furnished
Security/Medical clearances	20	\$1,250		\$25,000		
Domestic travel for DOS training	20	\$1,200		\$24,000		mandatory DOS training
Partner Donations						
U. S. sending institutions	20	\$500	61		\$610,000	Fellows salary (donated)
Training fees, educa materials						
	20	\$505		\$10,100		DOS Security training fees per ESF, incldg educ materials
Miscellaneous						
	20	\$1,250		\$25,000		may involve field work, seminars, presentation materials
Note: Per-participant costs vary from \$3,000 to over \$10,000. Amount is to support ESF in 2008-2009						
Activity Total					\$229,740	\$793,000